

Sports / A29
Heat melt Pistons, tie East Finals 1-1

News / A4
BIR hounds resin importers

Business / B1
Fitch upgrades RP credit-rating outlook

World / A10
Al-Qaida in Iraq names acting leader in place of wounded Zarqawi

Metro / A23
2 Dutch brothers suspected of running cybersex den shot dead



Solon asks: Where have all the 'jueteng' men gone?

By Michael Lim Ubac and Luige A. del Puerto

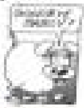
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, May 27, 2005 • 42 pages / vol. 20 / no. 168

PNP's biggest 'losers' are a very happy bunch

By Luige A. del Puerto





PARASOL BEAUTY

'Jueteng' probes losing steam

GMA allies want inquiries scrapped

By Julie Lalog Javellana, Michael Lim Ubac and Armand N. Nocum



Journalists hone shooting skills

Cruz clarifies stand, warns Malacañang

By Christian V. Esguerra

GMA lauds rare courage of bishop

By Michael Bengco, Alyce D. Alonzo and Norman P. dela Cruz



Pagasa: Rainy days here; El Niño over

By Norman Bordadora

Australia apologizes but scandal still rages

WEATHER FORECAST

[illegible]

Second FRONTPAGE

Noynoy wants to know how intel funds are spent

By Philip C. Tubeza

[illegible]

How do you solve problem like JPE? Senate in stalemate

By TJ Burgonio

THE MAJORITY and minority blocs in the Senate remained at odds over how to resolve a problem like Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile.

[illegible]

Wrong signal

[illegible]

Oblivious to controversy

[illegible]

SC ruling

[illegible]

'UNFIT TO STAY IN GOV'T'

Señeres show

By Christine Avendaño and Philip C. Tubeza



SEÑERES

MALACAÑANG is not about to let Roy Señeres, the National Labor Relations chair who resigned the other day amid much rancor and noise, to have the last word.

The circumstances of Señeres' resignation showed his "true colors" and that the insinuations and reports against him were true, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

"This also shows that he's not really fit to stay in government," Bunye told a press briefing.

The Palace was apparently angered by Señeres' dramatic staging of his resignation on Wednesday, during which he called for the replacement of the Arroyo administration by a new government and urged the police and the military to rescue the Filipino people from the "clear and present evil" of massive corruption.

Señeres publicly signed his resignation letter and ordered it sent to Malacañang directly at a press conference that included Fortunato Abat, a former defense secretary and retired general, whose Coalition for National Salvation last month sought the President's ouster.

Señeres' resignation came more than a month after the President confronted him and accused him of being involved in a destabilization plot against her administration.

Time to move on

He denied this and initially declared he would stay on at his post even after the President removed all his administrative powers but abruptly announced he would resign last Monday.

Bunye yesterday said the Palace would be announcing Señeres' replacement at the NLRC soon and that "it was time for us to move on and attend to the other matters of government."

Informed of Bunye's comments, Señeres said the press secretary was being "myopic."

"He (Bunye) should look at intelligence dossiers and he would see that I have never sat down for a meeting with Abat," he said in a phone interview.

He explained that Abat had called and asked to go to his press conference to give "moral support."

He claimed to have learned that Abat had invited him to join his group from the media and that he was considering the offer.

"We share the same sentiments that we're up against an evil regime," he said.

Señeres said he would go on terminal leave starting May 30 and had recommended Raul Aquino, the presiding NLRC commissioner of the 2nd Division, as officer in charge.

In Congress, House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles yesterday expressed relief that Señeres had resigned.

'No team player'

He said Señeres quit not because of alleged government corruption but because the President had noticed "his inability to be a team player" and to effectively run the NLRC.

He described Señeres' complaints against the Arroyo administration as "a simple case of sour-graping" and assailed his "overdramatic" resignation and use of "recycled accusations" to justify it.

"He's like a child whose candy was taken. It is better for him to just shut up and admit the fact that he failed the people as head of the NLRC," Nograles said in a statement.

He said many labor disputes were "left rotting in the NLRC" because Señeres seemed to be "preoccupied with many other things rather than carrying out the mandate of his office."

Nograles warned Seneres that his call for an uprising against the government could be "considered as inciting to rebellion" and that the government could file charges against him.

"The law is harsh on people who incite others to take up arms against the government," he said.

Militants woo resigned chief of NLRC

By Jerome Aning

MILITANT workers groups yesterday urged resigned National Labor Relations Commission chair Roy Señeres to expose all the wrongdoings in the Arroyo administration and asked him to join them in future mass actions to make her step down.

"We are all confident that Señeres would soon come out with his own bombshells regarding the massive crimes of corruption (in the government)," said Fernando Hicap, fisherfolk group Pamalakaya national chair.

Hicap said the broad anti-Arroyo movement would welcome the ex- NLRC chief "with open arms and political affection," adding: "The snowballing anti-Gloria movement is the best political alternative for the resigned NLRC chief to purse a patriotic and pro-people career."

However, the moderate Trade Union Congress of the Philippines indirectly blamed politicking behind Señeres' fall and called for the appointment of an NLRC chair who has no political inclinations or ambitions.

"We want a professional, a non-politician. We hope politicians would keep off the NLRC. We want someone who understands the problems in the NLRC," TUCP spokesman Alex Aguilar said.

Señeres on Wednesday formally announced his resignation as NLRC chief because President Arroyo was no longer happy with him and that the feeling was mutual. The Office of the President recently clipped the powers of the NLRC chief following rumors that Señeres was allegedly involved in a plot to destabilize the government.

Señeres denied the accusations that he was plotting to oust President Arroyo, including allegations that he was seeking the help of the United States government and other military officials to remove the Arroyo administration from power.

Boracay resorts sit on public land—Defensor

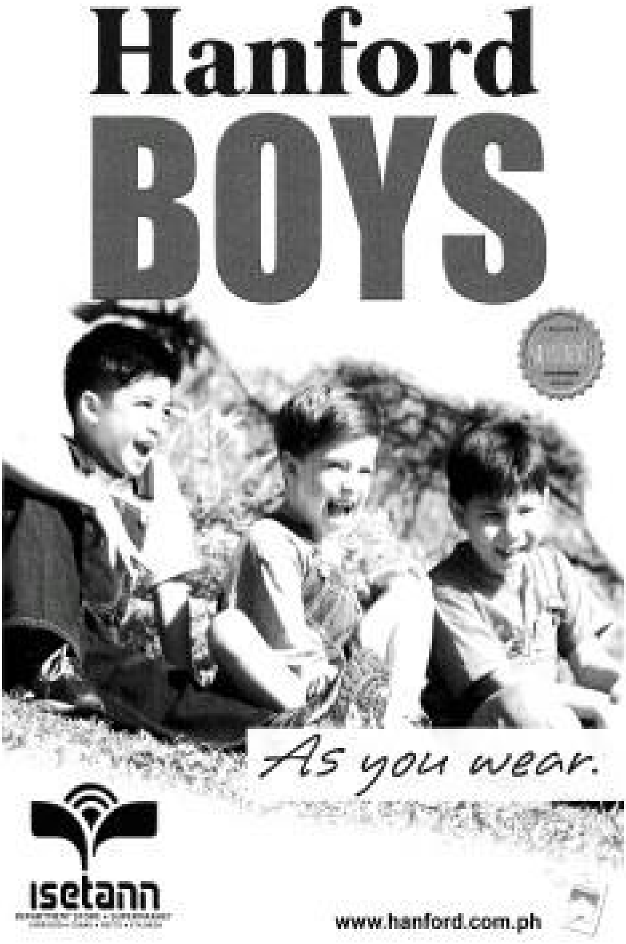
By Norman Bordadora

BIR hounds resin importers

By Armand N. Nocum

Garcia wants to put Abaya on the stand

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan



The Daily Gospel

Supreme Court Doctrines

GMA junks town hall meetings

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

Texting eyed as tax source once again

By Philip C. Tubeza

Cruz clarifies stand, warns Malacañang

Hearsay

Shock absorber

Deadline

GMA lauds rare courage of bishop

Commendation

Gun smugglers?

People's court

Australia apologizes but scandal still rages



ALVAREZ

No sacking

Rift in gov't

'ALARMING'

Number of youth offenders on the rise

North Rail squatters' relocation starts



Children's Hour receives P2.5 M, tops P100 M in donations

PNP's biggest 'losers' are a very happy bunch





Journalists hone shooting skills



New health chief wants docs to serve in RP first

Pinoy tops World Bank essay tilt





The WORLD

VICE WOUNDED ZARQAWI

Al-Qaida in Iraq names acting leader



All US missions in Indonesia shut in wake of threat



SORRY IS HARDEST WORD

Car bomb detonated in Madrid

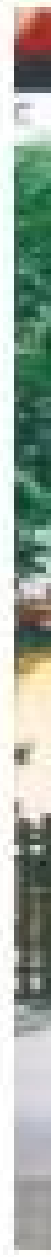
Michael Jackson defense rests case

AMID PROPHECIES OF DOOM

China has vaccine which blocks bird flu

Expert says China dismally unprepared for bird flu crisis

India, Pakistan start talks on glacier standoff



Japanese split over how to deal with Yasukuni



Previously secret FBI records cite detainee claims of Koran abuse





PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

High cost, low quality

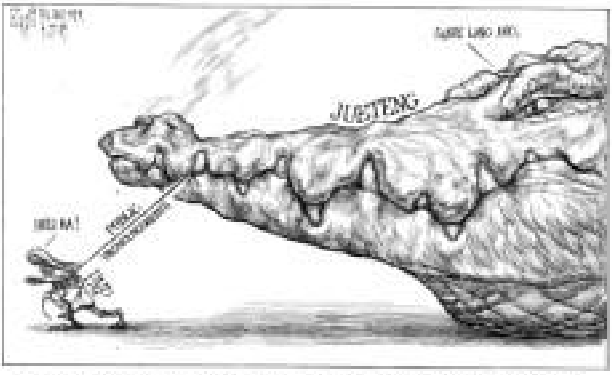
EDITORIAL

TENS of thousands of Filipino parents bought pre-need educational plans because they wanted to assure quality education for their children. In the beginning, such plans were premised on the assumption that government-imposed limits on tuition increases would persist. When the government "liberalized" education in the early 1990s, pre-need companies were faced with a choice of either limiting benefits to plan holders to the amounts assumed when the plans were sold, or to simply honor the plans as open-ended commitments to their clients.

Companies such as the College Assurance Plan decided to pay out benefits to plan holders above and beyond what had been assumed when the plans were sold. This worked for a surprisingly long period of time. However, when concerns over the fiscal viability of this commitment began to erode the financial prospects of such companies, and government launched investigations and put a stop to the further selling of new plans to finance old ones, the whole system collapsed.

The result is the demise of a genuinely Filipino innovation—the pre-need educational plan—and untold misery for hard-working families who put their faith in these firms. [illegible]

[illegible]



What's WHO doing to lower medicine prices?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

[illegible]

Tuition freeze and market backlash

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

[illegible]

World Banks sees 'fiscal turnaround'

ANALYSIS



Amando Doronila

May's miracles

PINOY KASI



Michael L. Tan

'Legal calisthenics'?

AT LARGE



Rina Jimenez-David

Intellectual piracy

LOOKING BACK



Ambeth R. Ocampo

Overhaul the tuition system

On disrespect for the RP flag

VOICES ON INQ7.NET

On jueteng

Across the NATION

Deadlock reached on talks for wage hike in Visayas

6,000 'jueteng' workers now jobless, says DSWD

More aid seen from Finland

Misamis docs raise alarm over dengue

[illegible]



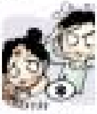
DAY'S HARVEST

ROUNDUP

Police hunt ex-soldier

[illegible]

Wives vs husbands



[illegible]

Forum on environment



[illegible]

Girl dies in fire

[illegible]

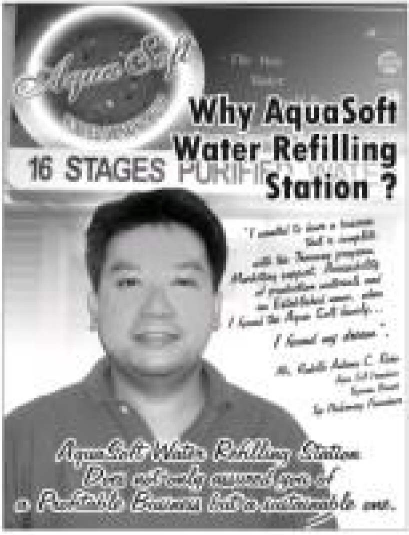
4 die as jeep plunges

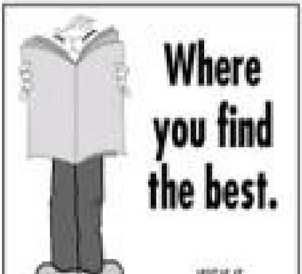
[illegible]

Teams now hunting masterminds in Esperat slay



GOOD OUT OF BAD







TASK FORCE TRASH





Where in the world is Mike A? In South Korea, says his brother



ARROYO

LP fielding ARMM bet

Pagasa: Rainy days here …

MISSING PIECES OF EVIDENCE SOUGHT





'Jueteng' probes losing steam

Evangelicals pray for success vs 'jueteng'

Not equipped

Ground for whitewash

Administrative raps

Following the process

Cruz's witness

Solon asks: Where have all the 'jueteng' men gone?



ESCUDERO



LOMIBAO

Everyone down the line

Monitoring compliance

Where! Where!

Gravestones

Nonsense

Suspected drug dealers nabbed

Abu suspect talks

Revillame: 'Apology card proves nothing'

Mandaluyong health centers get boost



2 die in cybersex den raid



WILLEM VAN Engelenburg

Surveillance

Rescued

Another site

First street festival opens at Reposo

Closed to traffic

Mural

Mimes and films

Invitation

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

Godio, Farrales in crucial duel

Matches Today

7 a.m. V. Godio (1) vs. L. Farrales (5), 7:10 K. Gonzales (3) vs K. Uy (2) 7:20 J. Papa (1) vs. M. Ilagan 7:30 Oh KT (4) vs. K. Tayao (12) 7:40 I. Clavecilla (2) vs. R. Sangil (6) 7:50 A. Avena (3) vs. O. Gan (11)

By Jong Arcano

GEN. TRIAS, Cavite—Top seed Vinice Godio and Leana Farrales battle for a spot in the title match, while Katrina Gonzales battles Kathleen Uy in a showdown between teeners in today's ladies semifinals of the inaugural National Tournament of Club Champions at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club course here.

Godio of Alabang, the most senior among the semifinalists, hopes to sustain the steady form she's been showing since the eliminations against a determined and fifth-seeded Farrales, the Globe executive carrying the Wack Wack banner.

Gonzales of Riviera is slightly favored against Cebu Country Club's Uy in an interesting Final Four duel of junior players.

Explosive matches are also on tap in the men's division quarterfinals of the event copresented by INQUIRER Golf and Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp in cooperation with the Golf Distributors Association of the Philippines.

John Papa, the No. 1 seed, faces an acid test when The Country Club bet goes up against the steady-playing Marty Ilagan of Manila Southwoods.

Another match to watch is the Iggy Clavecilla-Raymund Sangil tiff for a semifinal seat.

Eagle Ridge bet Oh Kwang Taek, a prohibitive favorite due to his familiarity with the course, tackles Sta. Elena representative Kevin Tayao while Mt. Malarayat's Abe Avena collides with Oliver Gan of Tagaytay Highlands.

The first-ever tourney for club champions is supported by Omega watches and Toyota Innova, the event's official vehicle.

The other backers are Philippine Airlines as the official carrier, Printown, GG&A Club Shares, Mizuno, Titleist as the official ball, Aviva Insurance, Nike Golf, Ayala Greenfield Estates, Coppertone Sport and Sunbolt Sports Drink.

After playing the Faldo course during the eliminations on Tuesday and the Aoki layout in the first round of the tournament proper, the survivors move to the easier Norman course today. Yesterday was a rest day, which allowed participants to relax like the young Uy, who enjoyed the many amenities of Eagle Ridge.

It's going to be an ultimate test of accuracy tomorrow when the ladies final and the men's semis is held at the feared Dye course. The men's final returns to the Faldo course on Sunday.

The men's division winner will be sent to Scotland as a special guest of the HSBC world match play while the ladies champion wins a trip to the inaugural HSBC ladies world match play in New Jersey, USA. The runner-ups each get an Omega Limited Philippine edition watch while the third placer get a golf bag from Mizuno.

Fiba tilt begins Sunday

Games Sunday
(Araneta Coliseum)
12:30 p.m.—Iran vs. Lebanon
2:45 p.m.—Kuwait vs. Syria
5:30 p.m.—Opening Ceremony
6 p.m.—RP vs. India
8:15 p.m.—UAE vs. Jordan

I.R. Iran, powered by tall, talented young players, is tagged as one of the strong title contenders in the 16th Fiba Asia Champions Cup kicking off Sunday at the Araneta Coliseum.

Bannering the team is 7-foot-4 Jaber Rouzbabahani Darrehsari, who's tagged as the next important Asian cage superstar. Only 18, he was one of the few Asians invited to join the NBA camp last year.

The other "Iranian Towers" to watch are 6-foot-8 Hamed Sohrabnejad and 6-7 Aydin Nekkhah Bahrami.

Reinforcing the team are 6-2 Andre Doran Pitts and 6-7 Lorenzo Daynard Hall.

Iran will open hostilities against defending champion Lebanon at 12:30 p.m.

"Iran is a fighting team. Although Lebanon remains the title favorite but I think Qatar, the Philippines and Iran will give a good fight this year," said BAP secretary general Graham Lim.

"Iran has improved a lot with its new breed of fast, tall and talented players. This tournament will be a gauge if Iran can make it among the elite cage powers of Asia," Lim added.

SPORTS

POC door still open for BAP



COJUANGCO

Aces forge semis playoff



SANDY Barnachea of Touch Mobile crosses the finish line at the end of the first stage of the Golden Tour in Lucena.

Barnachea captures Golden Tour opener

By Marc Anthony Reyes

[illegible]

Guerrero braces for tough stage

[illegible]

Japan spikers thwart Taiwanese

[illegible]

Bata trounces foe as Amang tumbles

[illegible]



YOUNG JINS: [illegible]

Top jr netters clash in semis

[illegible]

Cojuangco caretakers have bigger task

BARE EYE



Recah Trinidad

[illegible]

Torre, RP chessers shine in Thailand



TORRE



LADY BOOTERS

POC door . . .

Nava paces nat'l juniors

EUROPEAN CHAMPION

Liverpool rallies to beat AC Milan for title

AFP



Yankees dump Tigers

Reuters

Petron taekwondo slated



Wade sizzles as Heat sear Pistons, level series at 1-1





Lady Stags extend win streak to four

Federer, Nadal hurdle French Open rivals



Eneos dragfest slated in Clark; Peralejo guest

Briones repeats as Cocker of the Year

CLEAN LIVING



Marcelo R. Mijgo

SPORTSWATCH

Inquirer, Star Sports 9-ball promo

Greatest Game stars SCOOP guests

PSA Forum moves to new home

Special 4-cocker up in Pasay

Summer Heat derby deadline today



Wizards gain; Kornets force rubber match

By Jasmine W. Payo

Villanueva replaces injured Raymundo

BCAP clinics June 1

Baguio makes NBC debut vs Parañaque

WHAT'S INSIDE

BUSINESS

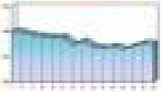


Fitch upgrades RP credit-rating outlook

AFTER suffering from successive credit-rating downgrades early this year, the Philippines got a lift yesterday after Fitch Ratings revised its outlook on the country's long-term foreign and local currency ratings from "negative" to "stable."

Lifetime Plans refutes SEC order

CURRENCIES



STOCK MARKET



Stop the new WTO round

COMMENTARY

Background

Cross Country Comparisons

Countries	Average Tariffs	
	Bound	Applied
Philippines (agri only)	[illegible]	[illegible]
Thailand (agri only)	[illegible]	[illegible]
Big 4 Developing	[illegible]	[illegible]
Quads	[illegible]	[illegible]

Analysis

A present danger

Philippine position

MEETING DEMAND GROWTH

New airport in Cebu eyed

Fortuner waiting list: 10 months

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

TOYOTA has struck a mother lode with its new Fortuner sports utility vehicle.

As of Wednesday, nationwide customer reservations for the new SUV had already reached 2,400, nearly equal to 10 months of Philippine allocation, reported an enthusiastic Daniel Isla, Toyota marketing first vice president.

"You would not believe who have been calling us" just to jump the queue, Isla added. But he clammed up before he could blurt out any name, after realizing in time that he was talking to a naughty columnist.

Because of the overwhelming demand, Toyota Philippines on Wednesday wrote the Singapore regional office to plead for an increase in the allocation of the Thailand-assembled SUV.

After Thailand, the Philippines became the second country to introduce the Fortuner, which bears a resemblance to Toyota's high-end Lexus RX 300.

Launched only last weekend, the Philippine Fortuner model is the first left-hand drive version for the SUV that the leading Japanese carmaker plans to sell worldwide from its Thai production base. Fortuner shares the same engine and platform as the new Hilux pickup and the Innova wagon that had been launched earlier.

The Hilux itself has a three-month waiting list, a phenomenon last seen when customers rushed to buy the Honda CR-V before the excise tax deadline to avail themselves of Honda's skillful dodging of the so-called "10-cheater rule."

According to Isla, Toyota Thailand even has a longer, one-year waiting list for the Fortuner, which he claims had stolen the market from Isuzu, the traditional Thai SUV king.

Bruised by the Thai experience, Isuzu Philippines on Monday counter-struck by launching an upgraded version of its Alterra (for "all-terrain") SUV, which, unlike the Fortuner, comes with plushier interiors, individual DVD players with 11 speakers and tweeters, and a heavier-load bearing, if bouncier, rear leaf-spring suspension.

But the trimmings and interior upgrades, plus the fact that Alterra is a foot longer than the higher-end Isuzu Trooper, comes with a P100,000 to P150,000 higher tag than the competition.

Riding Toyota's coattail

ISUZU may be toiling under the shadow of market leader Toyota, but the smaller Japanese vehicle manufacturer has found a way to make money, rather than just eat dust, from the trail of its giant competition.

The local Isuzu will launch in July a diesel-engine replacement campaign targeting not only industrial revolution-era clunkers of the country's 200,000 jeepneys but also the engines of hundreds of thousands of Toyota Tamaraw, FX and Revo.

Costing P200,000 to P250,000, the brand-new, Clean Air Act-compliant Isuzu diesel engines come equipped with conversion kits to fit the engine bays of the target vehicles.

According to the grapevine, Isuzu has already secured a government commitment to provide cheaper financing through transport cooperatives for the ambitious undertaking.

Excluding the Toyotas, P200,000 for 200,000 jeepneys already translates to a whopping P40-billion market, a business that Isuzu had already quietly cornered, even before the Clean Air Act.

Proof? Just go and pop open the hood of any jeepney.

Money-go-round

• THE GROUNDBREAKING for John Gokongwei's first Fort condo, Fifth Avenue Place, will not happen until November but already the taipan's sales force has started pre-selling a second Fort condo, the all-loft McKinley Park Residences, after having sold out the first venture, mostly to overseas Filipinos.

The second condo is a block away from the proposed St. Luke's Medical Center and overlooks a park, which hopefully will not be converted into a carpark, just like what had happened in Salcedo and Legaspi villages.

Pre-selling price: P68,000 a square meter.

• NEW FILIPINAS magazine owner Greg Macabenta is planning a Philippine edition of the San Francisco-based monthly, which he had just acquired from taipan daughter Mona Lisa Yuchengco.

Heard through the grapevine

EQUITABLE PCIBank chair Antonio Go, expatriate director Anthony Conway and president Rene Buenaventura walked out of the bank's excom meeting Monday in an attempt to defeat a combined GSIS-SSS resolution to stop the Go family from voting for themselves the so-called 10-percent "treasury" shares being held by the investment house subsidiary.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Harbour Centre wants license to handle containerized cargo

Merrill Lynch eyes stake in Maynilad, to buy debt



GSIS plans overseas investments

HSBC rolls out e-banking for SMEs

Pre-need woes take toll on insurance sector

By Michelle V. Remo

[illegible]

Lifetime Plans . . .

From page B1

[illegible]

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SMC wins control of NatFoods

By [illegible]

NEW ZEALAND dairy exporter Fonterra Co-operative Group has agreed to sell to San Miguel Corp. its 19.9-percent stake in Australian dairy giant National Foods Ltd.

An Inquirer source in Australia said that with Fonterra's stake, SMC will end up with a total interest of 76.8 percent in National Foods. NatFoods shareholders had accepted SMC's offer to buy a majority stake in the company at A$6.40 per share.

Fonterra earlier said that it would sell its 19.9 percent stake in National Foods to SMC if the offer was unconditional.

SMC earlier declared its bid for National Foods unconditional. It said it would no longer impose a condition that required a 50 percent minimum acceptance by National Foods stockholders.

The source said that as of press time, SMC was still awaiting a confirmation from Fonterra on its acceptance of the offer.

Bloomberg, quoting Fonterra spokesperson [illegible], yesterday reported that the New Zealand company had accepted SMC's A$6.40 a share offer for its 19 percent holding in National Foods Ltd.

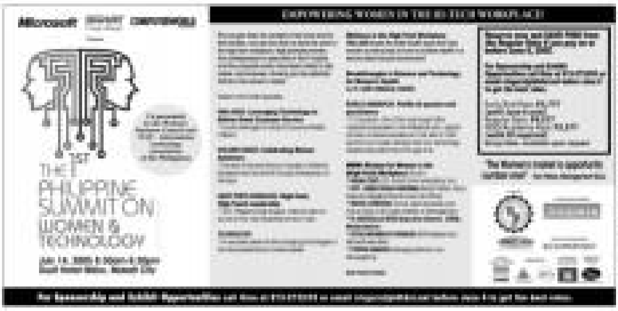
Fonterra's stake would give SMC the control of Australia's biggest publicly traded dairy company and a third of the country's A$5.5 billion ($3.7 billion) dairy industry.

SMC's offer to buy National Foods will close on June 14. Shareholders have until then to accept SMC's offer. Early last month SMC beat rival bidder Fonterra in the race for National Foods after Fonterra backed out of its bid to control the dairy company. Fonterra and SMC have been locked in a six-month long race for control of National Foods.

SMC offered to buy National Foods at A$1.9 billion, topping Fonterra's A$1.84 billion offer. Fonterra then withdrew its offer and agreed to sell its 19 percent stake to the company.

SMC's A$6.40 offer equals the highest price paid for National Foods shares on the Australian Stock Exchange and is at the higher end of National Foods' own board valuation of A$6.01 to $6.51.

SMC is setting aside P15 billion in capital expenditures until 2008 to finance its new beverage plants in Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam.



MDI Starts NEW SINAI MDI HOSPITAL Construction

[illegible]





[illegible]

[illegible]

Fitch upgrades ...

From page B1

taxing measures of the Arroyo administration that was signed the other day, is expected to raise P30 billion in additional revenues in the remaining part of the year and as much as P100 billion annually starting 2006.

The law lifts the VAT exemptions of several services and products such as oil and electricity, gives a standby authority to the President to raise the rate from 10 to 12 percent next year, and raises the corporate income tax rate from 32 to 35 percent.

Aside from the VAT law, Congress earlier passed the "sin" taxes bill, which raised the excise tax on cigarettes and alcohol products, and the lateral attrition law, which provided a reward and penalty system for the government's revenue-collecting agencies.

Fitch estimated that the implementation of the revenue-raising measures would trim the national government's budget deficit to 3.2 percent of the country's gross domestic product this year and 2.7 percent of GDP next year. The assumptions are much better than the 3.9 percent deficit to GDP ratio recorded in 2004. The budget deficit was at P187 billion last year.

The ratings firm noted that the country's debt levels were still quite high in 2004 at about 77.4 percent of GDP in 2004 for the national government and 98.4 percent for the entire non-financial public sector.

But it said debt ratios were expected to significantly go down with the fiscal reform measures in place. It said the national government's debt could fall below 70 percent of GDP by the end of 2006.

The announcement by Fitch of its improved outlook on the Philippines came after the national government posted a rare monthly budget surplus of P3.3 billion in April, the first time in four years.

Fitch said the stable outlook came with the assumption that the government would be able to sustain the implementation of its fiscal reform programs, and avoid the temptation to overspend with the increase in revenue collection.

Editor's Board

Met exhibit evokes Chanel's iconic feat



WINDOWS of spring and summer fashion at high-end Saks Fifth Avenue (left) and mid-priced H&M (right) in midtown Manhattan



A retrospective in New York charts how Coco Chanel reinvented the modern look and changed the way women dress

THIS is a good time to fly to New York City if you are a fashionista.

The shop windows of Manhattan are ablaze with spring and summer colors. Saks Fifth Avenue on, well, Fifth Avenue is a delightful bouquet of sorbet shades—vanilla, peach, mint green, etc.

If you don't have the budget for pricey designer labels, walk further up and you will come upon the popular Swedish H&M. This store carries affordable clothes designed by Karl Lagerfeld, who remains the principal designer in the House of Chanel. Although definitely not Chanel, the KL clothes carried by H&M are worth a second look, if not charging on your gold card.

But if you're a big Chanel fan whose one lifetime wish is to acquire a vintage Chanel suit but can't afford one, console yourself with the opportunity to be bowled over by the iconic designer's creations that are on display at the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum.

Fashionistas don't usually stray into museums, but they are among the curious who are being lured by the Chanel extravaganza at the Met's special exhibition galleries on the first floor.



LITTLE black evening Chanel dress of silk chiffon (1925)







Met show evokes Chanel's iconic feat



Her own best model







LIFESTYLE



Laidback O.C. and glitzy Bev Hills

APPLES' PICKINGS



Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

E-mail the author at [illegible]

Here are some new trends from La-la Land

I WAS never a big fan of Los Angeles. I always considered the place lacking in culture akin to that of New York and Paris or charm similar to that of Florence. But, surprisingly, I actually finally learned to like that vast expanse of freeways and fast-foods.

Even more surprising was that during this trip, I noticed that fashion in both ritzy Beverly Hills and Orange County, which encompasses areas like tony Newport Beach and laidback Huntington Beach (some of my favorite L.A. locales), was quite interesting and undeniably a study in contrasts.

Generally, L.A. fashion is relaxed and laidback, as compared to fashion in New York or other places in the U.S. But whereas O.C. or Southern California is more about surf wear [illegible] Bev Hills is more about designer clothing and flashy European cars.

In any case, much of the same trends seem to dominate the different areas of this sunshiny, palm tree-lined, movie star-filled city of angels. So, just in case you're looking for a bit of inspiration or are interested in expanding your sartorial horizons, here are some of the most popular trends in laid-back O.C. and glitzy Bev Hills.

LAIDBACK C3







Laidback O.C. and glitzy Bev Hills











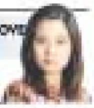
LifeStyle



THE AUTHOR'S new hairstyle by Louis Philippe Kuo

Pampering worthy of a queen

Makeover 911



Hair

Massage

Nails



BEFORE: Her hair was a mass of tangles and fried strands with a cheap-looking brassy color.





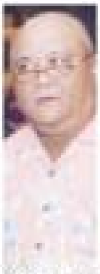

Domestic carrier marks fab 10



WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH



Maurice Arcache





Emperor's new food